

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) ~~Use of~~ A method of preparing a particulate material derived from mammalian hair to be used in the preparation of a paper or paperboard product, which particulate material ~~has been~~ is prepared by means of a process, which comprises the following steps:

(a) subjecting mammalian hair to an oxidation treatment in which the hair is contacted with ~~[[a]]~~ an alkaline or acidic solution, which comprises a bleaching agent, over a period of time ranging from 5 minutes to 16 hours;

(b) separating the oxidised hair from the solution;

(c) drying the separated hair; and

(d) subjecting the dried hair to a treatment in which the hair is formed into a particulate material having an average particle size in the range of from 0.5 to 4 mm.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~ The method according to claim 1, wherein the particulate material has an average particle size in the range of from 1 to 3 mm.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~ The method according to claim 2, wherein the particulate material has an average particle size in the range of from 1.5 to 2.5 mm.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~ The method according to claim 1, wherein the bleaching agent is selected from the group consisting of hypohalides, perborates, percarbonates, organic peroxides, ~~[[or]]~~ and hydrogen peroxide.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~ The method according to claim 4, wherein the bleaching agent comprises hydrogen peroxide.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim 1, wherein the solution is an alkaline solution having a pH value in the range of from 9 to 11.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim 1, wherein the alkaline solution has a pH value in the range of from 10 to 11.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim 1, wherein the solution is an acidic solution having a pH value in the range of from 3 to 7.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim 8, wherein the acidic solution has a pH value in the range of from 4 to 6.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim 1, wherein the treatment in step (d) is a refining treatment.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim 1, wherein the hair is first subjected to a washing step in which soluble components are removed from the hair before the hair is subjected to step (a).

12. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim 1, wherein the hair is derived from livestock.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim 12, wherein the hair is derived from pigs.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~[[Use]]~~The method according to claim ~~[[14]]~~1, wherein the particulate material comprises fibres.

15. (Currently Amended) A paper product comprising ~~[[a]]~~cellulose fibers mixed with the particulate material as defined in~~made by the process of~~ claim 1.

16. (Currently Amended) A paperboard product comprising ~~[[a]]~~cellulose fibers mixed with the particulate material as defined in~~made by the process of~~ claim 1.

17. (Currently Amended) Paper pulp comprising ~~[[a]]~~cellulose fibers mixed with the particulate material as defined inmade by the process of claim 1.

18. (New) A paper or paperboard product comprising cellulose fibers mixed with at least 20 wt. % of a particulate material derived from mammalian hair to be used in the preparation of a paper or paperboard product, which particulate material is prepared by means of a process, which comprises the following steps:

(a) subjecting mammalian hair to an oxidation treatment in which the hair is contacted with an alkaline or acidic solution, which comprises a bleaching agent over a period of time ranging from 5 minutes to 16 hours;

(b) separating the oxidised hair from the solution;

(c) drying the separated hair; and

(d) subjecting the dried hair to a treatment in which the hair is formed into a particulate material having an average particle size in the range of from 0.5 to 4 mm.